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### Re-introduction

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A mutually engaging conversation between Buddhism and psychoanalysis has been active for the past few decades. The famous Zen Scholar from Kyoto, Professor Shin’ichi Hisamatsu’s visit to Carl Jung in 1958 in Zurich (cf. Muramoto 1998), and D. T. Suzuki’s discussions through the early 1950s with the California Zen communities were amongst the first murmurings of what was soon to become an exceptionally fertile dialogue (Suzuki et al. 1960). From our present vantage, this dialogue appears to have grown widely, be thriving and moving inexorably into the future. Sparks of cross-fertilization between Buddhism and psychoanalysis were ignited long before the current upsurge of interest; in fact, well before the Hisamatsu–Jung encounter.

Some of the earliest interest in Buddhism exhibited by a Western psychologist is reflected in Thompson’s (1924) essay ‘Psychology in primitive Buddhism.’ Thompson was a Chicago psychoanalyst who developed a keen interest in Buddhism, particularly in its concept of karma. He is probably best known for an article he wrote which compared Freud’s notion of psychic determinism with the law of karma, revealing similarities in how the disciplines understood the untoward effects of the various dimensions of desire. Shortly after this seminal article, Franz Alexander (1931), another Chicago analyst, a member of Freud’s London inner circle, and a formative thinker in psychosomatic medicine, weighed in on the debate over Buddhist matters with an extraordinary and potentially controversial article on the complex psychology manifested in Buddhist training. In the 1950s and 1960s, other psychoanalysts were excited about the convergences they found between the practices of psychoanalysis and Buddhism (Horney 1952/1987; Fromm 1960). Their writings are evidence of the growing interest in the confluence of these topics, and hint of the exciting dialogue that was to follow – a dialogue with roots emanating from the discussions of Hisamatsu and Jung.

Ponder for a moment what the exchange between these two formidable thinkers must have been like. What made it such a watershed event? Perhaps its greatest significance is that it occurred at all, as it was inaugural to a long and remarkable series of such historical encounters. Notwithstanding the critical timing and vital significance of the meeting, there were a few problems
surrounding it; likely contributing to an array of misunderstandings arising in the aftermath of their seminal discussions. For example, first there are the formidable difficulties arising when one attempts to translate the fundamental terms (the lexicon) of any discipline. Second, we also know that there were at least two versions of the encounter (cf. Meckel and Moore 1992; Muramoto 1998). Third, both participants may have pitched their levels of expectation and questioning too high: as if these agreements about basic terminology had already been made clear.

The major controversy between them centered round Hisamatsu taking Western psychology to task for its overemphasis on the self! In retrospect, it seems he was determined to understand the differences between the Western (Jungian) notion of self and the true self of Zen. But was there more to it? Hisamatsu emphasized the true self of Zen was without form or substance. Jung compared his own notion of the authentic self to the Hindu notion of Atman. Hisamatsu was quick in his rebuttal, noting the commonly accepted notion of Atman contained traces of substance. Troubled by this response, Jung argued Hisamatsu was splitting theoretical hairs by articulating elusive ontological, if not metaphysical, distinctions. Jung further indicated his affront to Hisamatsu’s ontological stance by defensively retorting there was insufficient evidence to substantiate these notions. In exasperation, Jung exclaimed, “Fundamentally, I don’t know” (Muramoto 1998: 46).

Perhaps we witness in their discourse differences that inevitably come to the fore in any discussion contrasting a clinical, experiential approach with a religious and philosophical one about formulation of metapsychological and theologically informed concepts. Seeking to resolve such differences seems to be exactly what prompted Hisamatsu’s visit to Zurich. Similar motivations gave the authors represented in this book good reason to make our recent journey to Kyoto. There it became clear the topics under discussion by Hisamatsu and Jung are as alive today as they were in 1958. The discourse between these two conceptual masters fueled the emerging exchange between the two disciplines; a tribute to the lasting impact of their shared interests and common vision. But, as in all good debates, inevitable points of departure eventually emerge, many of which are addressed here; for example, self and no-self, the laws of karma, the role of striving and desire in suffering.

Though one of our discourses is very old and the other relatively young, Buddhism and psychoanalysis are considered today as both belonging to Wisdom Traditions. Neither are ‘grand narratives’ or ‘theories of everything’ – both are attempts to understand what suffering is, and how it may be brought to an end. Both invite their followers to explore the depths of psyche or mind, exhorting them to face the difficult and sometimes frightening psychological experiences that emerge during any in-depth exploration of mental process. Our shared concerns, and their relevance to the profound struggles of contemporary times, set the stage for the 2006 Kyoto Conference and the collaborative effort leading to this book.
Our meeting was called ‘The Kyoto 2006 Conference on Self and No-Self in Psychotherapy and Buddhism.’ We convened for the primary purpose of deepening the exciting exchange of ideas begun in 1999 at the first Kyoto Conference on Buddhism and Psychotherapy. The proceedings of that meeting were published in *Awakening and Insight* edited by Polly Young-Eisendrath and Shoji Muramoto (2002). Our interdisciplinary group assembled at Hanazono University in Kyoto, Japan, in 2006. This venue is unique, being the only Zen University in Japan. We met with the express purpose of keeping this vibrant dialogue fresh with the cross-fertilization of shared and controversial concepts. As a continuation of the Hisamatsu–Jung debates, we certainly wanted to keep the spirit of their discourse alive, and hoped to keep the evocative ideas emerging from the 1999 meeting at the forefront. Thus, within the context of that controversy, our volume includes at least three chapters that highlight the debate over the ontological status of the self.

Reggie Pawle brings to the volume the results of his interviews with Japanese Zen Masters who variously report on their understanding of the meaning of (experience of) no-self. Ando and Miller both discuss historical and theoretical perspectives on the self vs. no-self debate while referencing the legendary position on the true nature of the self articulated by the early Zen Master Dōgen. Dōgen (1985), of course, constantly exhorts us to “forget the self” and reminds his readers of the perennial benefits that emerge when one is able to do so. Other parallels emerged as well. Hisamatsu and Jung questioned the ability of a philosophical/psychological school of thought ever relating in a meaningful way with a religious perspective. Robert Gunn’s chapter addresses this perennial question in a fresh, unfettered manner.

We saw both Hisamatsu and Jung grappling with the roles, functions, and meanings of the conscious and unconscious minds. These subtle matters of consciousness and its vicissitudes are addressed both directly and indirectly by many authors in this book. In short, through both the Kyoto Conference and this volume, we wanted to elevate the debate among participating religious leaders, practitioners, and academicians to an even higher level, and we were bold enough to hope we could promote these life-transforming notions to the general public. One shared belief informing this activity is the notion that the actual process of meeting and discussing such things is essential not only to the psychological growth and development of individuals but also to the promotion of world harmony. It is commonly accepted by those involved with these conferences that any individual’s expanded awareness and insight into intention and motivation, as well as humankind’s expanded awareness, are equally essential to the flourishing of (if not the survival of) human beings.

The 2006 Kyoto Conference on Self and No-Self began with high-minded intentions: We wished to create an environment to enable people from around the globe to become more aware of their intransient foibles and self-limiting ways. We hoped to influence people to incorporate greater tools for
self-awareness and improvement into their ordinary daily lives. So we met in
the service of these purposes: to keep this exciting exchange of ideas alive, to
help transform people’s hearts and minds, to, perhaps, change the world.
And, we met because it was fun.

Many of the 2006 participants were active in the 1999 conference – as
presenters, attendees, or discussants. Both experiences have proved so intel-
lectually and emotionally rewarding that at least half of the participants
implored us to conduct a repeat performance. They also want to keep the
conversation alive, to deepen relationships with intercontinental colleagues,
and perhaps find new like-minded friends: hence this book, distilling some
of the material we discussed. For us, the desire for a profound level of
engagement stems primarily from the good feelings associated with fulfilling
relationships begun with Japanese, European, and American colleagues. We
hope in our words you too can meet us.

Although Buddhism is by far the older tradition, the Japanese Buddhist
monks and scholars warmly greeted this exchange of ideas with practitioners
and professionals from abroad. They were deeply generous and enthusiastic
in welcoming us to their country and, even more important, they calmly
and steadfastly helped to set the stage for this extraordinary exchange. We
thank them for their clarity with boundaries, their inquiring attention, and
generosity of Spirit.

Through the exchange of papers and ensuing discussions, it became appar-
ent that members of both traditions were not only talking about the meaning
of the good life, the psychologically healthy life, the awake life, but were also
passionately committed to practices promoting it. Many presentations by
members from each tradition included the discussion of practical methods
and techniques for arriving at and living the good life, the awake life, even
as they passionately spoke of strategies for reducing human suffering –
individually and globally.

Breakdown of chapters

The chapters in this book have been written at a level that should engage
equally both beginners and seasoned practitioners and scholars from either
discipline. Communicating these essential ideas is our primary objective, and
we hope to create an atmosphere that invites newcomers. We ask you, in turn,
to join us in this continuing discussion and contribute to this exchange of
ideas.

The chapters in this volume are organized according to similarity of topics.
The book begins with introductory chapters reflecting the interface of the
two disciplines and offering thoughts about their shared history (Ando and
Gunn). From there we include three chapters under the heading of Buddhist
Theory and Practice (Magid, Yasunaga, and Pawle), then two chapters
comprising a part called Bridges (Austin and Perelman); one looks at the
neuroanatomy of meditation (an internal bridge), the other at the parallels between spiritual teachers and psychotherapists (an external bridge).

From there, we move to a part about *Psychotherapy Theory* – replete with Buddhist implications and clinical vignettes (Miller, Young-Eisendrath, and Tift). Then, a set of chapters dealing more exclusively with *Psychotherapy Practice* (van Zyl, Mathers, Mace, and Wallace). The volume concludes with two fascinating parts addressing the more ineffable, if not numinous, dimensions of the work. One part is entitled *Mysticism and Spirituality* (Shimizu, Kron, and Muramoto); then, a group of chapters on *Myth and Fairy Tale* (Nakamura, Hart, and Grant); and, for a finale, in a part called *Re-introduction*, a poetic meditation on the feeling of both Zen and therapy (Cooper). We hope you, the reader, enjoy a thought-provoking journey through these exciting and challenging chapters. Please take notes and contact the authors with your comments and questions. We sincerely wish to keep the dialogue alive.

**References**


